

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for controlling modifications to user choice settings, the method comprising:

(a) storing a user choice setting as a protected value that is secured by an access control indicator, the user choice setting determining an application's operation in a user's computing device, the application's operation including handling a particular event in the user's computing device;

(b) in response to receiving a request from the application to modify the user choice setting, requesting authorization from the user to modify the user choice setting; and

(c) in response to receiving an input from a user authorizing [[an]] the application to modify the user choice setting on the user's behalf[[:]]:

(i) modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value;

(ii) modifying the user choice setting by writing a modified user choice setting to the protected value; and

(iii) restoring the access control indicator to prevent writing to the protected value.

2. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the user's computing device has an operating system with a registry and wherein the protected value is a registry key stored in the Windows® registry and the access control indicator is an access control list (ACL) that has been initialized to prevent writing to the protected value.

3. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 2, wherein the operating system also has a security subsystem and wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes providing to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the Windows® operating system.

4. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 3, wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes providing to the user ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures, wherein ownership of the registry key

automatically provides to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the Windows® operating system.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes allowing the user to temporarily take ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures after receiving the input from the user authorizing the application to modify the user choice setting on the user's behalf.

6. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 3, wherein restoring the access control indicator to prevent writing to the protected value includes removing user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the Windows® operating system.

7. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 6, wherein removing user rights to modify the ACL includes returning ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures to the Windows® operating system.

8. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:  
generating a user choice setting user interface (UI);  
displaying the current user choice setting on the UI along with other options for the user choice setting; and  
receiving the authorizing input from the UI, along with a further input indicating a modified user choice setting including at least one of the other displayed options for the user choice setting.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising generating a change notification to the user whenever the user choice setting has been modified, the change notification identifying the application that modified the user setting and the contents of the protected value before and after the modification.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the user choice settings include at least one of a user preference relating to a file association, an autoplay setting, contents of a start menu, a registered client setting, a protocol handler, a MIME type handler, a task association, a Web browser home page, a reset Web page setting, and a sidebar setting.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein the registered client setting includes at least one of a Web browser, e-mail, media player, instant messaging, and virtual machine for Java setting.

12. (Currently amended) A system for communicating user choice settings between an application and a registry for storing the user choice settings, the system comprising:

a registry for storing a user choice setting as a protected value in a registry key, the user choice setting determining an application's operation in a user's computing device, the application's operation including handling a particular event in the user's computing device;

an access control list (ACL) for securing the registry key;

an interface to control modifications to the user choice setting; and

[[an]] the application issuing a request to modify the user choice setting on the user's behalf via the interface, the interface obtaining an approval of the request from a user; the interface further modifying the ACL to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key upon obtaining the approval, the interface further writing to the protected value the modified user choice setting; and the interface further restoring the ACL to prevent writing to the protected value in the registry key after writing the modified user choice setting.

13. (Original) The system of Claim 12, the interface further notifying the user whenever the interface writes to the protected value, including notifying the user of a content of the protected value before and after the interface writes to the protected value and further notifying the user which application requested the modification.

14. (Original) The system of Claim 12, wherein the user choice setting is at least one of a user preference relating to a file association, an autoplay setting, contents of a start menu, a registered client setting, a protocol handler, a MIME type handler, a task association, a Web browser home page, a reset Web page setting, and a sidebar setting.

15. (Original) The system of Claim 14, wherein the registered client setting includes at least one of a Web browser, e-mail, media player, instant messaging, and virtual machine for Java setting.

16. (Currently amended) The system of Claim 12, wherein the user's computing device includes an operating system having a security subsystem and wherein modifying the ACL to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key includes providing to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the Windows® operating system.

17. (Currently amended) The system of Claim 12, wherein modifying the ACL to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key includes providing to the user ownership of the registry key, wherein ownership of the registry key automatically provides to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the Windows® operating system.

18. (Original) The system of Claim 12, wherein modifying the ACL to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key includes allowing the user to temporarily take ownership of the registry key after receiving the user approval authorizing the application to modify the user choice setting on the user's behalf.

19. (Currently amended) A computer-accessible medium having components for safely modifying a user's preferences for when and how an application is to operate on the user's computer, the medium comprising instructions to:

(a) store a user choice setting as a protected value that is secured by an access control indicator, the user choice setting determining an application's operation in a user's computing device, the application's operation including handling a particular event in the user's computing device;

(b) in response to a request from the application to modify the user choice setting, request authorization from the user to modify user choice setting; and

(c) in response to receiving receive an input from a user authorizing [[an]] the application to modify the user choice setting on the user's behalf[[:]]:

(i) unlock the protected value to permit writing to the protected value;

(ii) modify the user choice setting by writing a modified user choice setting to the unlocked protected value; and

(iii) lock the protected value to prevent writing to the protected value.

20. (Currently amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, wherein the user's computing device includes an operating system having a registry and wherein the protected value is a registry key stored in the Windows® registry of and the instruction to unlock the protected value to permit writing to the protected value includes an instruction to modify an access control list (ACL) that has been initialized to prevent writing to the protected value.

21. (Currently amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 20, wherein the operating system also has a security subsystem and wherein the instruction to modify the ACL to permit writing to the protected value includes an instruction to provide to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the Windows® operating system.

22. (Currently amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 20, wherein the instruction to modify the ACL to permit writing to the protected value includes an instruction to provide to the user ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures, wherein ownership of the registry key automatically provides to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the Windows® operating system.

23. (Original) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 20, wherein the instruction to modify the ACL to permit writing to the protected value includes an instruction to allow the user to temporarily take ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures after receiving the input from the user authorizing the application to modify the user choice setting on the user's behalf.

24. (Currently amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 20, wherein the instruction to lock the ACL to prevent writing to the protected value includes an instruction to remove user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the Windows® operating system.

25. (Currently amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 24, wherein the instruction to remove user rights to modify the ACL includes an instruction to return ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures to the Windows® operating system.

26. (Original) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, further comprising instructions to:

generate a user choice setting user interface (UI);

display the current user choice setting on the UI along with other options for the user choice setting; and

receive the authorizing input from a user via the UI along with a further input indicating a selection of a modified user choice setting including a selection of at least one of the other displayed options for the user choice setting.

27. (Original) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, further comprising instructions to generate a change notification to the user whenever the user choice setting has been modified, the change notification identifying the application that modified the user setting and the contents of the protected value before and after the modification.

28. (Original) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, wherein the user choice settings include at least one of a user preference relating to a file association, an autoplay setting, contents of a start menu, a registered client setting, a protocol handler, a MIME type handler, a task association, a Web browser home page, a reset Web page setting, and a sidebar setting.

29. (Original) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 28, wherein the registered client setting includes at least one of a Web browser, e-mail, media player, instant messaging, and virtual machine for Java setting.